

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0236

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (WOLFF, LESTER)
SUBJ: CODEL WOLFF: DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SUMMARY: MEETING WITH CODEL WOLFF, SINGAPORE FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM DETAILED THE SUCCESSES OF ASEAN COMPARED WITH INDO-CHINESE COUNTRIES, SUGGESTED THAT ASEAN COULD BE A "SHOW WINDOW" FOR THE ADVANTAGES OF NON-COMMUNIST SYSTEMS WHICH THE U.S. SHOULD SUPPORT, SAID HE PREFERRED THE STATUS QUO IN KOREA TO PLANNED U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND EXPLAINED GOS DETENTION AND REFUGEE POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

2. CODEL WOLFF CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM AT THE MINISTRY ON JANUARY 12. RAJARATNAM WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER OF STATE LEE KHOON CHOY AND OTHER FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, BUT HE HANDLED THE SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION
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HIMSELF FROM THE SINGAPORE SIDE.

3. IN HIS OPENING REMARKS, CHAIRMAN WOLFF DESCRIBED TO RAJARATNAM HIS PLAN TO PROMOTE FORMATION OF AN ASIA-PACIFIC INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY. RAJA RESPONDED POSITIVELY, NOTING THAT FUTURE LEADERS WILL EMERGE FROM PARLIAMENTS AND THAT AN ASSEMBLY WOULD ENABLE THEM

TO GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON ASEAN AND THE SITUATION IN INDO-CHINA, RAJA SAID ASEAN IS FAR MORE STABLE THAN INDO-CHINA, WHERE WAR HAS ALREADY BROKEN OUT BETWEEN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. HE NOTED THAT "NO ONE IS GOING FROM ASEAN TO INDO-CHINA", AND THAT THE INDO-CHINA REFUGEES MAY BE THE BEST JUDGES OF THE MERITS OF THE TWO SYSTEMS. HE BELIEVES THAT VIETNAM NEEDS ASEAN MORE THAN ASEAN NEEDS VIETNAM, AND RECOUNTED AS AN EXAMPLE OF VIETNAM'S ECONOMIC WEAKNESS THAT THE RECENT VIETNAMESE DELEGATION TO INDONESIA HAD ASKED THE GOI TO PAY FOR THEIR EXPENSES, EVEN THE COST OF AIRCRAFT FUEL. ASEAN IS TWO OR THREE GENERATIONS AHEAD OF INDO-CHINA ECONOMICALLY, AND IT IS IN THE U.S. INTEREST THAT THIS LEAD BE MAINTAINED. THE U.S. DIRECT INTERVENTION IN INDO-CHINA HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL, BUT PEACEFUL COMPETITION PRESENTS THE U.S. WITH A SECOND OPPORTUNITY. THE U.S. SHOULD SUPPORT ASEAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH MAINTAINING MARKET ACCESS AND ASSISTANCE, SO THAT ASEAN CAN CONTINUE TO BE A "SHOW WINDOW" FOR THE ADVANTAGES OF NON-COMMUNIST SYSTEMS.

5. RAJA STRESSED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. TROOPS IN SOUTH KOREA. THE REAL QUESTION IS NOT THE NUMBER STATIONED THERE BUT WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD STAND ASIDE IN THE EVENT OF AN INVASION FROM THE NORTH. THE QUESTION
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IS OF KEY IMPORTANCE TO SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN, WHICH HAVE TO KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THEY CAN RELY ON THE U.S. IN EXTREMIS. IF THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IS CUT BACK, THE U.S. MUST DO OTHER THINGS TO PERSUADE THESE COUNTRIES OF OUR SUPPORT. RAJA NOTED THAT THE JAPANESE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN TALKING ABOUT BUILDING UP THEIR FORCES, A DEVELOPMENT ABOUT WHICH THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE DISTINCT RESERVATIONS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE FAVORS THE STATUS QUO IN SOUTH KOREA, RAJA SAID THAT HE DOES, AS DO OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES, "EVEN THE CHINESE". NO ONE IS UPSET ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE U.S. PRESENCE IN SOUTH KOREA; WHY CHANGE IT? HE REPLIED TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY SAYING THAT NO ONE BUT VIETNAM WANTS THE U.S. TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PHILIPPINES.

7. RAJA TOLD THE CODEL THAT U.S. INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS IS "RIGHT AND PROPER"; HUMAN RIGHTS REPRESENT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR SYSTEM AND THE COMMUNIST SYSTEMS. HOWEVER, SINCE COMPLETE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IS ANARCHY, THERE MUST BE CERTAIN RESTRAINTS. IN SINGAPORE, INDEPENDENT ONLY SINCE

1965 AND A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY, THE GOS MUST DETAIN THOSE WHO ANTAGONISTICALLY PROMOTE CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE FOR FEAR OF A RACIAL BLOODBATH. IF THE TWO CHINESE CHAUVINISTS NOW UNDER DETENTION WERE TRIED, THEY WOULD USE THE TRIAL FOR FURTHER PROPAGANDA. AS FOR DETENTION OF COMMUNISTS, NO ONE WILL TESTIFY AGAINST THEM FOR FEAR OF REPRISALS. SUCH REPRISALS HAVE OCCURRED, SUCH AS ACID THROWN IN THE FACE OF TEACHERS COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO TESTIFY. THE GOS, CONSEQUENTLY, SEES NO ALTERNATIVE TO DETAINING THEM WITHOUT TRIAL. RAJA SAID THAT THIS POLICY IS ALWAYS AN ISSUE BUT THAT IT REPRESENTS THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

8. THERE IS NO DISCRIMINATION IN SINGAPORE ON RELIGIOUS OR RACIAL GROUNDS, RAJA CONTINUED, AND THE GOS IS VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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TOUGH ON THOSE WHO TRY. CHAIRMAN WOLFF REMARKED THAT THERE IS SOME CONFLICT IN THE INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, WITH SOME DEFINING THEM AS POLITICAL RIGHTS. HE ADDED THAT PREVENTIVE DETENTION IS VERY DANGEROUS IN CORRUPT HANDS.

9. CHAIRMAN WOLFF WENT ON TO ASK HOW WE COULD REACH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION OVER THE INDO-CHINA REFUGEES. RAJA SAID THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM. HE HAD TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN THAT THE REFUGEES ARE A WORLD RESPONSIBILITY AND THAT SINGAPORE CANNOT ABSORB ANY MORE ITSELF. HE NOTED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER, IN HIS MEETING WITH DERIAN, HAD COMMENTED THAT "THERE IS A LOT OF HYPOCRISY CONNECTED WITH THE REFUGEE PROBLEM". THE PRIME MINISTER HAD TOLD DERIAN THAT SINGAPORE WAS PREPARED TO TAKE REFUGEES IN TRANSIT FACILITIES LOCATED ON ONE OF THE SINGAPORE ISLANDS UNDER A DEFINITE PLAN WITH A FINITE LIMIT TO BE REVIEWED EVERY FIVE YEARS. RAJA SAID THAT NO ONE DISPUTES THAT THERE IS A HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM, BUT ITS SOLUTION HAS TO BE MANAGEABLE. HE CITED THE EXAMPLE OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, WHOSE PROBLEM WAS LEFT UNRESOLVED FOR 30 YEARS AND CREATED ENORMOUS DIFFICULTIES.

10. IN RESPONSE TO CHAIRMAN WOLFF'S COMMENT THAT THE INDO-CHINA BOAT PEOPLE WILL PERISH IF NO SOLUTION IS REACHED, RAJA EXPRESSED THE FEAR THAT AS SOON AS WORD GETS AROUND ON THE AVAILABILITY OF A SINGAPORE TRANSIT FACILITY, THE REFUGEES WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO COME HERE. PERHAPS QUOTAS SHOULD BE SET UP FOR RECIPIENT COUNTRIES.

11. CHAIRMAN WOLFF SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH AN EDITORIAL IN THE STRAITS TIMES ON OUR MUTUAL INTEREST IN NARCOTICS. RAJA REMARKED THAT THERE ARE SERIOUS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS
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TO THE DRUG PROBLEM, AND THAT SINGAPORE HAS THE DEATH
PENALTY FOR TRAFFICKERS. WOLFF POINTED TO THE GREAT DANGERS
OF NOT MAINTAINING COOPERATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE SINGAPORE'S
ENTREPOT TRADE MAKES IT A TARGET FOR TRAFFICKERS SHIPPING
TO EUROPE AND THE U.S.
HOLDRIDGE

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